

Remarks

Claim 1 has been limited to include the limitations of claims 12, 13 and 14. The invention as claimed therefore now involves so-called first, second and third devices.

Consequential amendments are made in dependent claims 2, 15, 16 and 18. Independent claims 32 and 36 are amended for consistency with claim 1. Claims 12-14, 17, 19-29, 33-35, 37 and 29 have been cancelled without prejudice.

For the purposes of comprehensibility and to allow a more ready comparison between the invention and the prior art, it is proposed in this response to replace the references to “first”, “second” and “third” devices with more colloquial and “user-friendly” terminology. This is done on the strict understanding that the terminology employed is for illustrative purposes only and is not to be implied as any limitation on the scope of the claims.

The “first device” will be referred to as the “form filling server” . This device accesses a data file and returns user data to fill the fields in the form.

The “second device” will be referred to as the “content server” . This server hosts the form to be filled.

The “third device” will be referred to as the “client device”. This is the device from which the user accesses the network. (Markus also refers to this as a browser).

Markus (US Patent No. 6,499,042) describes a system which operates as follows, see col. 1, lines 21-34:

- 1) The client device accesses a form hosted on the content server.
- 2) The client device then establishes a connection with the form filling server.

- 3) The client device transmits to the form filling server the URL of the content server, and the location of the form in question.
- 4) The form-filling server then accesses that URL, locates the form, and retrieves and fills in the required data.
- 5) The content server presents the filled-in form to the first device for user confirmation.

The present invention, as claimed in amended claim 1, operates as follows:

- 1) The client device accesses a form hosted on the content server.
- 2) The client device provides the URL of the form filling server to the content server.
- 3) The content server establishes a connection with the form filling server and requests the missing data.
- 4) The form-filling server retrieves and returns the required data.
- 5) The content server presents the filled-in form to the first device for user confirmation.

This difference in the communication protocols followed in the two systems provides significant advantages to the present invention.

The Markus system is based on the assumption that the form filling server will always be able to access a form when provided with a URL and a form location. However, it is common experience that when a link is sent from one person to another, e.g. by email, the link cannot always be accessed. This is particularly true when the URL is generated as part of a secure http session (where this type of invention has its primary application).

Thus, for example, if a user has navigated through an airline booking site and has reached the secure page where billing information is to be input, that URL cannot generally be accessed by another party. The secure content server requires not only a cookie (which the Markus system proposes to transmit) but also requires secure session keys, which cannot be readily transferred between entities. Many secure servers will also reject a new connection coming from a different IP address (e.g. a form filling server requesting access from one IP address to a secure session form generated for a user at a different IP address).

It is also quite common for forms to be generated dynamically during a user session, and for those forms to include elements generated earlier in that session. Such forms do not have a simple network location which can be accessed by any third party server as Markus describes.

The next major difference between the respective systems is that Markus requires the user to open a second parallel connection when the web browser is already open. Quite simply put, a large number of web users, perhaps the majority, do not have the technical know-how or the confidence to have multiple browser instances open at one time. Alternatively, the functions can be accomplished by a further program which is launched from the browser and establishes the new connection to the form filling server. This exposes the client device to security weaknesses by allowing a new program access to the Internet. In contrast, the user of the present invention needs only to fill in, on the already open web page, the name of the form filling service (e.g. type `http://www.form-filling-service.com/johndoe` into a box on the form itself). This latter method does not require third-party software to access the Internet, and does not require that the user have any additional technical know-how.

It can therefore be seen that the respective systems, while both intended to allow a proxy server to fill in forms on behalf of a user, accomplish this objective in quite a different manner in terms of the communications between the three constituent devices. It can also be seen that the invention does not depend on two distinct devices being able to access a secure URL which may be dynamically

generated for a single session only and which may be designed to be accessible only by a single user as part of a secure key-encrypted session.

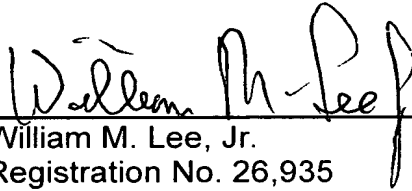
Nothing in Markus teaches towards or suggests a system in which the client device instructs the content server to request its data directly from the form filling server. Indeed, Markus teaches the skilled person that the data should be provided from the form filling server in a different manner, i.e. the form filling server imitating an actual user of the form by accessing the relevant URL with the user's own cookie, to replicate the user's experience. Accordingly it is submitted that the claimed invention is not obvious in view of Markus.

Given the above, further and favorable reconsideration is requested.

An appropriate Petition for Extension of Time is also submitted herewith.

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Respectfully submitted,

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